THEOSOPHY

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We believe that there is but one undefinable Principle in the whole Universe. We believe that all else which has being, whether material or spiritual, and all that may have existence, actually, or potentially in our idealism, emanates from this Principle. That everything is a correlation in one shape or another of this Will and Force; and hence, judging of the unseen by the visible, we base our speculations upon the teachings of the generations of Sages who preceded Christianity, fortified by our own reason.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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AUM

Accuse not Nature! She hath done her part; Do thou but thine!

—JOHN MILTON

THEOSOPHY

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THEOSOPHY PURE AND SIMPLE

IN her first message to the American Theosophists, written in 1888, H. P. Blavatsky spoke of the "wave of transcendental influence" that was bringing about a distinct change in the spirit of the age, converting the earlier interest in phenomenalism into philosophic inquiry. The Founders of the Theosophical Society, she said, saw this possibility and need, and commissioned the effort now known to the world as the Theosophical Movement. As one of the Teachers directly connected with the Society said in 1880, in a letter to a highly placed Englishman, Allan O. Hume: "This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must come soon, and which will push the age towards extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans."

Writing to American students some eight years later, H.P.B. credited the work under the leadership of William Q. Judge with "a new start in America which marks the commencement of a new Cycle in the affairs of the Society in the West." After these encouraging words, she added:

> The Theosophical Society led the van of this movement; but, although Theosophical ideas have entered into every development or form which awakening spirituality has assumed, yet Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition. . . .
>
> The faint-hearted have asked in all ages for signs and won-

> ders, and when these failed to be granted, they refused to believe. Such are not those who will ever comprehend Theosophy pure and simple. But there are others among us who realize intuitionally that the recognition of pure Theosophy—the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets—is of the most vital importance in the Society, inasmuch as it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path.

What, it is natural to ask, is "pure Theosophy"—or "Theosophy pure and simple"? H.P.B.'s reply follows immediately. It is "the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets."

A complementary statement by Mr. Judge, at the end of the sixth chapter of *The Ocean of Theosophy,* serves to expand H.P.B.'s meaning. He says:

> . . . as Mind is being evolved more and more as we proceed in our course along the line of race development, there can be perceived underneath in all countries the beginning of the transition from the animal possessed of the germ of real mind to the man of mind complete. This day is therefore known to the Masters, who have given out some of the old truths, as the "transition period." Proud science and prouder religion do not admit this, but think we are as we always will be. But believing in his teacher, the theosophist sees all around him the evidence that the race mind is changing by enlargement, that the old days of dogmatism are gone and the "age of inquiry" has come, that the inquiries will grow louder year by year and the answers be required to satisfy the mind as it grows more and more, until at last, all dogmatism being ended, the race will be ready to face all problems, each man for himself, all working for the good of the whole, and that the end will be the perfecting of those who struggle to overcome the brute. For these reasons the old doctrines are given out again, and Theosophy asks every one to reflect whether to give way to the animal below or look up to and be governed by the God within.

The common project, then, is self-reform, inspired and guided by what Mr. Judge calls the "scientific and self-compelling basis for right ethics."

In what sense or in what form does Theosophy provide a scientific and self-compelling basis for ethical behavior? The answer seems clear. The rational foundation for ethics is metaphysics, having to do with the nature and destiny of man and the laws which govern his inner development. And, indeed, the teaching

of these metaphysics is embodied in the "tenets" to which H.P.B. refers—principally Karma and Reincarnation—and those "old doctrines" spoken of by Mr. Judge which relate to the rationale of right human action. The tenets, then, which H.P.B. seems to make subordinate, are the means of the rational explanation of things.

From reasoning in this way it becomes apparent that metaphysical or philosophically scientific ideas, *when applied,* provide the light of explanation to the puzzles and dilemmas of human life. By this means the rational power of intellect gives support to moral and ethical intuitions, which is a way of saying that when mind and spiritual insight are joined, the unified human being acts justly and wisely, having only one object in view. This is full justification for the frequent assertion that Theosophy is religious science and scientific religion.

What, after all, is science, and what is religion? They are the two aspects of man's nature as a knowing or truth-seeking being. Science supplies an account of the structure of the universe and of the processes of nature and life, both within and without. Religion has for its concern the enlargement of meaning or fulfillment. The sense of purpose in human life is a religious feeling. Science, then, is the knowledge which illuminates and guides the expression of that motivation through all the complexities of manifested existence. Science is religion brought to self-conscious awareness of the means of fulfillment. Together they lead the aspirant to the final realization of godhood or divinity. But in isolation, both science and religion become forms of self-defeat. Both are negations of the reality of spiritual evolution, making us think, as Mr. Judge says, "we are as we will always be."

What is the chief cry and criticism of science in our time? Often coming from distinguished scientists, it is that there is no recognition of or reference to human purpose in the teachings of science. The method of science, relating solely to the structure of the visible universe, ignores as irrelevant or even nonexistent the great and surging movement in all nature—and conscious in man—toward a higher life. Inevitably, the potentialities of godhood in all are denied because the feelings by which those potentialities make themselves known are neglected. This is the only useful meaning for the word "Atheism"—a denial of the reality of a higher life.

Religion without science, on the other hand, falls into the ultimate corruption of sacerdotalism, which is the abdication of the potential god within each human being. All the historic religions of the world, H.P.B. declares in "Is Theosophy a Religion?", "are true at the bottom, and all are false on their surface." It is not possible to understand either the intuitions which come from within or the teachings of high spiritual visitants to earth, without the clarifying light of mind. Priestly domination of mankind is the result of mental failure.

There can be no synthesis of science and religion without the regeneration of both through Theosophy. As H.P.B. said:

> The teachings of the two are incompatible, and cannot agree so long as both Religious philosophy and the Science of physical and external (in philosophy, *false*) nature, insists upon the infallibility of their respective "will-o'-the wisps." The two lights, having their beams of equal length in the matter of false deductions, can but extinguish each other and produce still worse darkness. Yet, they can be reconciled on the condition that both shall clean their houses, one from the human dross of the ages, the other from the hideous excrescence of modern materialism and atheism.

The means of reconciliation lies in application of the tenets of Theosophy. H.P.B. explains:

> Its doctrines, if seriously studied, call forth, by stimulating one's reasoning powers and awakening the *inner* in the animal man, every hitherto dormant power for good in us, and also the perception of the true and the real, as opposed to the false and the unreal. Tearing off with no uncertain hand the thick veil of dead-letter with which . . . old religious scriptures were cloaked, scientific Theosophy, learned in the cunning symbolism of the ages, reveals to the scoffer at old wisdom the origin of the world's faiths and sciences. It opens new vistas beyond the old horizons of crystallized, motionless and despotic faiths; and turning blind belief into a reasoned knowledge founded on mathematical laws—the only *exact* science—it demonstrates to him under profounder and more philosophical aspects the existence of that which, repelled by the grossness of its dead-letter form, he had long since abandoned as a nursery tale. It gives a clear and well-defined object, an ideal to live for, to every sincere man or woman belonging to whatever station in Society and of whatever culture and degree of intellect. Practical Theosophy is not *one* Science, but embraces every science in life, moral and physical. It may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal "coach," a tutor of

> worldwide knowledge and experience, and of an erudition which not only assists and guides his pupils toward a successful examination for every scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for *the lives* to come, if those pupils will only study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves,* instead of studying them through the spectacles of orthodox science and religions. ("Is Theosophy a Religion?")

The program of reform here outlined should not be regarded as having its goal in the reconstruction of scientific and religious institutions. Such cultural changes may come, but they will not, H.P.B. warned, result from particular Theosophic influence, but from discoveries and experiences in the scientific fields themselves. Nor will the churches, as Mr. Judge remarked, ever come over to us in a body. Science and religion must first be joined in the lives of individuals, through practice of the philosophy from which both originated and in which they are never parted. Theosophy seeks emancipation of men's minds from the authority of existing science and religion, to be accomplished through self-discovery on the part of those who study the mysteries of life within themselves, and from intelligent criticism by observers able to point to the logical and practical shortcomings of established scientific and religious institutions. This public criticism is necessary, since institutions, being the consolidated effects of partial human attitudes and cultural limitations, are not given to self-reform. H.P.B. comments:

> Thus, if theosophy does no more than point out and seriously draw the attention of the world to the fact that the *supposed* disagreement between science and religion is conditioned, on the one hand by the intelligent materialists rightly kicking against absurd human dogmas, and on the other by blind fanatics and interested churchmen who, instead of defending the souls of mankind, fight simply tooth and nail for their personal bread and butter and authority—why, even then, theosophy will prove itself the saviour of mankind.

On both counts, then—the social as well as the individual—the Theosophic enterprise presents an inspiring prospect. It leads to self-discovery and knowledge on the one hand, and on the other, to greater independence and freedom of mind for people generally.

But what of the difficulties? While practical Theosophy, as H.P.B. says, "embraces every science in life, moral and physical," the acceptance of certain tenets and doctrines does not transform

the inquiring man or woman into a sage filled with certainty and understanding. A "teaching" is not knowledge but a fruit of the knowledge gained by another. A tenet is a part—a supporting part—of a metaphysical structure which *corresponds* to the nature of things. A doctrine which tells, say, about the passage of the ego through the states after death, is a statement of the general laws of psychic transformation affecting all souls in the period between incarnations, and every student knows that a single interpretation of doctrine may suffer from misleading assumptions. To be a student, in short, is to set one's feet on the path to knowledge, but also to encounter hazards and distractions which are inevitable in any evolutionary journey. How, then, are doctrines and tenets converted into actual knowledge?

Application is the principle or law under which this conversion takes place. For the mind, explanation is the application of tenets and doctrines to a particular question or situation. For the man, the resulting action becomes the learning process. Plato's declaration, Ideas rule the world, was no idle utterance. Men are mind-beings, and mind-beings act according to the ideas they hold. For the student, then, the task is mental reconstruction. The tools are the teachings of Theosophy. As they are put into use, the conceptions of self, the world, of law, of others, and of human objectives, near and far, undergo change. One's thinking achieves better and better conceptual approximations of the natural order, which is to say, a clearer understanding of the events brought into the present by the law of cycles, with increasing recognition of what is wise action in relation to them. This applies to events both great and small.

But those who work according to theory, or, as H.P.B. once put it, "correct belief," are likely to make mistakes. Belief is not knowledge, but its seed. To become knowledge belief must take root in the soil of human experience, and survive through all the vicissitudes of earthly existence. It must continue to grow into knowledge during storms and trials as well as in benign surroundings. We learn most of all from our mistakes, and this, we may come to see, is the natural harvest of life. What, after all, is the human condition but the grand total of all our past mistakes—the living structure of the *Maya* which brings us into incarnation again and again? We discover more precisely how the law works—or perhaps how it does not work—by examining the effects of past

action and correcting our misconceptions.

Since free will is a reality and individuality the means by which the light of spirit is focused on lower planes of existence, the karmic heritage of each one is different. We may act together as a hierarchy, but we gain our salvation—which is self-knowledge—by individual realization. It is for this reason that students must "study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves*." The higher laws of nature are to be learned in no other way.

To study the mysteries of the universe is to seek their rational explanation. Explanation is made to grow out of application of the tenets of the philosophy, and as fresh understanding becomes the basis for action, increase in knowledge results. We know only what we have acted upon. The rest remains hearsay, in some form of correct or incorrect belief.

As a text, *The Secret Doctrine* is a magnificent illustration of the two-fold task. This work is filled with instruction in occult metaphysics, giving a schematic outline of the universe in all its parts, their times and evolutions. Yet the metaphysics is everywhere interspersed with examples of application. Again and again the reader is told what some event, condition, or course of experience means to reincarnating souls. There is continual alternation between the meaning of objects and the development of subjects. We learn how the world was made and the part we have had in making it. There is no unbroken discourse on the occult constitution of the universe, but always explanation along the way of our place in the changing conditions of life. This is application on the human or mind plane of the cosmic metaphysics. Cosmology becomes biography. Our task is to recognize it as autobiography.

Progress is step by step. The intellect, with its two-dimensional or theoretical approach to all learning, rushes to logical conclusions, and then is bewildered by the slow pace of human development. To be able to leap in mind to an intellectual grasp of the entire cycle of human existence—knowing the "teaching" in all its metaphysical symmetry, and accepting the rules laid down for disciples of all times—is still not yet knowledge. The intellect makes abstraction after abstraction, each one different yet as "true" as the one preceding, but not even the totality of all possible true abstractions is the same as the knowing gained through conscious being. Abstractions are generalized expressions of ten-

ets, doctrines, and correct beliefs, but knowledge comes from living the life. Knowledge is the subjective being of the one able to shed light from himself on whatever is to be known—the one to whom it is said, "O thou who wast Disciple, but art Teacher now."

This is the climax of the becoming which begins with obtaining a rational explanation of things. The process of growth is long, extending through all the progressive cycles of incarnation. This is the term of man's Promethean mission, of which *The Voice of the Silence* says:

> If thou art taught that sin is born of action and bliss of absolute inaction, then tell them that they err. Non-permanence of human action, deliverance of mind from thraldom by the cessation of sin and faults, are not for "Deva Egos." Thus saith the "Doctrine of the Heart."

DIVINITY

Divinity is always acquired. It is not an endowment. It does not exist of itself. If we could be *made* good, if we could be *made* to turn around and take a righteous course, life might seem very much easier to us. But there is no escaping the law; no one can get us "off" from the effects of our wrong-doing; no one can confer knowledge on another. Each one has to see and know for himself. Each one has to gain Divinity of himself, and in his own way. We think of this as a *common* world. But it is not so. There are no two people who look at life from the same viewpoint, who have the same likes and dislikes, whom the same things affect in exactly the same way. No two people are alike either in life or after the death of the body. Each makes his own state; each makes his own limitations; each acquires his own Divinity. Divinity lies latent in each one of us; all powers lie latent in every one, and no being anywhere can be greater than we may become.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE FOUR CLASSES OF KNOWLEDGE

IN Hinduism all knowledge was divided into four classes—(1) Science; (2) Philosophy; (3) Religion; (4) Esotericism. Science is the body, philosophy the mind, religion the soul, and esotericism the spirit of knowledge. Four great paths take the student to the end of the journey.

The Path of Practice is the path of the scientist. By repeated experimentation, by observation checked and rechecked, by analysis and reiterated verification the scientist grows—learning and teaching. Treading this path, he develops patience, accuracy, and detachment for the results of his labours. The Path of Science must be valued in the light of the virtues it brings out in the practitioner. It is not what is said by the scientist that should be made the means of measuring his achievements; no doubt his theories change; but in evolving theories, qualities are unfolded, which are assets for the future collected in the present.

The Path of Knowledge is the path of the philosopher. By the method of synthesizing the many theories and even speculations, he builds the power of abstract meditation. Removing his thinking from the field of objects he enters that of subjects, from the world of forms he goes inward to formless worlds. Unlike his brother scientist, he is unconcerned about details and confines his reflections to underlying principles. He finds out the trinity of knower, knowledge and object known.

The Path of Devotion is the path of the religious. Having seen with the mind's eye the source of all, which is freedom absolute—Sat, Chit, Ananda, the existence of bliss-full ideation—and also that the separated "I" or Ahamkara is the cause of bondage to Knowledge, and therefore to ignorance, Avidya; to Itchcha, the will to live, which implies the will to die; to action which means also to fate—Karma—the religious unfolds true fiery devotion as a means to a grand end, a sublime attainment. What is his objective? To reach that state of Compassion Absolute, Paramartha Satya, which enables him to love all creatures, the little selves,

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NOTE.—Adapted from *Ancient Landmarks* in THEOSOPHY 19, No. 8.

bound by the power of the One Great Self. As pure and powerful manifestations of the Great Self, in the world of men, he uses the life-work of the Incarnations, Avataras. To understand the mystery, the hidden reality, the Occultism of Life Incarnate, he perforce seeks Teachers, Gurus of the great knowledge, Maha-Vidya, which is secret-knowledge.

The Path of Sacrificial Action or real magic is the path of the esotericist. The esotericist labours in full knowledge; performance of certain actions is undertaken, in definite manner, by deliberately planned method, according to what is learnt from the lips of Divine Men perfected. He alone *knows* what the devotee feels, what the philosopher thinks, what the scientist sees, without their limitations.

Thus the four categories of knowledge are practically utilized and the thread of evolution of the human being runs through them.

THE SOURCE OF TRUE SCIENCE

The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the source of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

THE RACES OF MAN

V: THE "MISSING LINK"

OUR teachings show that, while it is quite correct to say that nature had built, at one time, around the human astral form an *ape-like external* shape, yet it is as correct that this shape was no more that of the "missing link," than were the coverings of that astral form, during the course of its natural evolution through all the kingdoms of nature. Nor was it on this Fourth Round planet that such evolution took place, but only during the First, Second, and Third Rounds, until he became what he was in the First Root-Race of present humanity. The real line of evolution differs from the Darwinian, and the two systems are irreconcilable, except when the latter is divorced from the dogma of "Natural Selection" and the like.

The *Third Round* terrestrial animal forms were just as much referable to types thrown off by Third Round man, as that new importation into our planet's area—the mammalian stock—is to the Fourth Round Humanity of the Second Root-race. The process of human fœtal growth epitomizes not only the general characteristics of the Fourth, but of the Third Round terrestrial life. The potentiality of every organ useful to animal life is locked up in Man—the microcosm of the Macrocosm—and abnormal conditions may not unfrequently result in the strange phenomena which Darwinists regard as "reversion to ancestral features."

If men existed two million years ago, they must have been—just as the animals were—quite different physically and anatomically from what they have become; and they were nearer then to the type of pure mammalian animal than they are now. Anyhow, we learn that the animal world breeds strictly *inter se, i.e.*, in accordance with genus and species—only since the appearance *on this earth* of the Atlantean race. It is far more likely that the anthropoid ape should be discovered to be *the descendant of man*, than that these two types should have a common, fantastic and no-where-to-be-found ancestor. *"Man was the first and highest*

NOTE.—This is the fifth part of a six-part series on the races of mankind, collated from *The Secret Doctrine*.

(mammalian) *animal that appeared in this* (Fourth Round) *creation. Then came still huger animals; and last of all the dumb man who walks on all fours.*"

There *was* a "special creation" for man, and a "special creation" for the ape, *his* progeny; only on other lines than ever bargained for by Science . . . man was indeed made in the image of a type projected by his progenitor, the creating *Angel-Force,* or Dhyan Chohan; while the wanderer of the forest of Sumatra was made *in the image of man,* since the framework of the ape, we say again, is the revival, the resuscitation by abnormal means of the actual form of the Third-Round and of the Fourth-Round *Man* as well, later on. Nothing is lost in nature, *not an atom.* . . .

It is in the suddenly arrested evolution of certain sub-races, and their forced and violent diversion into the purely animal line by artificial cross-breeding, truly analogous to the hybridization, which we have now learned to utilize in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, that we have to look for the origin of the anthropoids. Even though a *missing link* were found, the balance of evidence would remain more in favour of the ape *being a degenerated man* made dumb by some fortuitous circumstances, than tending to show that man descends from a pithecoid ancestor.

Owing to the very type of his development man *cannot descend* from either an ape or an ancestor common to both, but shows his origin from a type far superior to himself. And this type is the "Heavenly man"—the Dyhan Chohans, or the *Pitris* so-called. On the other hand, the pithecoids, the orang-outang, the gorilla, and the chimpanzee *can,* and, as the Occult Sciences teach, *do,* descend from the animalized Fourth human Root-Race, being the product of man and an extinct species of mammal—whose *remote* ancestors were themselves the product of Lemurian bestiality—which lived in the Miocene age, originating in the sin of the "Mind-less" races of the middle Third Race period. All forms which now people the earth, are so many variations on *basic types* originally thrown off by the MAN of the Third and Fourth Round. The basic types referred to were very few in number in comparison with the multitude of organisms to which they ultimately gave rise; but a general unity of type has been preserved throughout the ages . . . the human type is the repertory of all potential organic forms, and the central point from which these latter radiate. In this postulate we find a true "*Evolution*" or "*unfolding*"

—a sense which cannot be said to belong to the mechanical theory of natural selection.

The THIRD RACE FELL—and created no longer: it *begat* its progeny. Being still mindless at the period of separation, it begot, moreover, anomalous offspring, until its physiological nature had adjusted its instincts in the right direction. Men realized the unfitness—we must not say sin—of what they had done, only when too late; after the angelic monads from higher spheres had incarnated in, and endowed them with understanding. To that day they had remained simply physical, like the animals generated from them. For what is the distinction? The doctrine teaches that the only difference between animate and inanimate objects on earth, between an animal and a human frame, is that in some the various "fires" are latent, and in others they are active. The *vital fires* are in all things and not an atom is devoid of them. But no animal has the three higher principles awakened in him; they are simply potential, latent, and thus *non-existing*. And so would the animal frames of men be to this day, had they been left as they came out from the bodies of their Progenitors, whose *shadows* they were, to grow, unfolded only by the powers and forces immanent in matter.

The bestiality of the primeval mindless races resulted in the production of huge man-like monsters—the offspring of human and animal parents. The unnatural union was *invariably* fertile, because the then mammalian types *were not remote enough* from their Root-type—Primeval Astral Man—to develop the necessary barrier. Let us remember in this connection the esoteric teaching which tells us of Man having had in the Third Round a GIGANTIC APE-LIKE FORM on the astral plane. And similarly at the close of the Third Race in this Round. Thus it accounts for the *human* features of the apes, especially of the later anthropoids—apart from the fact that these latter preserve by *Heredity* a resemblance to their Atlanto-Lemurian sires.

As time rolled on, and the still semi-astral forms consolidated into the physical, the descendants of these creatures were modified by external conditions, until the breed, dwindling in size, culminated in the lower apes of the Miocene period. With these the later Atlanteans renewed the sin of the "Mindless"—this time with full responsibility. The resultants of their crime were the species of apes now known as Anthropoid. Yet there were no

anthropoid apes in the brighter days of the civilization of the Fourth Race; but Karma is a mysterious law, and no respecter of persons. The monsters bred in sin and shame by the Atlantean giants, *"blurred copies"* of their bestial sires, and hence of modern man . . . now mislead and overwhelm with error the speculative Anthropologist of European Science.

Thus, it is most important to remember that the *Egos* of the apes are entities compelled by their Karma to incarnate in the animal forms, which resulted from the bestiality of the *latest* Third and the earliest Fourth Race men. They are entities who had already reached the "human stage" before this Round. Consequently, they form an exception to the general rule. The latter are truly "speechless men," and will become speaking animals (or men of a lower order) in the Fifth Round.

Furthermore, we are taught that the transformations through which man passed on the descending arc—which is centrifugal for spirit and centripetal for matter—and those he prepares to go through, henceforward, on his ascending path, which will reverse the direction of the two forces—viz, matter will become centrifugal and spirit centripetal—that all such transformations *are next in store for the anthropoid ape also,* and these will all be men in the Fifth Round, as present men inhabited ape-like forms in the Third, the preceding Round.

This is how Occult Science explains the absence of any link between ape and man, and shows the former evolving from the latter.

(*To be continued*)

Nature always, so to speak, knows where and when to stop. Greater even than the mystery of natural growth is the mystery of the natural cessation of growth. There is a measure in all natural things—in their size, speed or violence. As a result, the system of nature, of which man is a part, tends to be self-balancing, self-adjusting, self-cleansing.

—E. F. SCHUMACHER

ALLEGORY AND PHILOSOPHY

QUESTION: What is the difference between analogy and allegory, and why is allegory not now more widely used in the presentation of Theosophy?

Answer: Analogy helps one to understand difficult or unfamiliar conceptions by likening them to a known idea or process in nature. This method takes advantage of the fact that all things have elements in common, more or less. In drawing an analogy one compares similar properties or relations.

In allegories, truths are couched in symbolical form. Without the key to their symbolism, allegories may seem to be quite meaningless, or only stories. Allegories appeal to the soul and may be intuitively grasped; but if the eye of Soul is veiled by misconceptions and prejudices, the allegory misses its mark.

Can we not see, then, one reason why Theosophy is not stated more in allegorical terms? The world is full of misunderstood allegories; what is needed is the *key* by which they may be understood.

In some times and circumstances, the use of allegory and parable is necessary. Simple people may profit more from allegory than from a philosophical or intellectual presentation of truth which they cannot appreciate. There are tribes who "are not yet ripe for any truth," and allegories guide such races to right living. But for men of the Fifth Race, in whom *Manas* is aroused, allegory may be misleading when not merely childish.

Writing on "Seership," Mr. Judge gives further reason for studying straight philosophy:

> In ancient days it was all very well for mystics to write figuratively so as to keep sacred things from the profane. Then symbolism was rife in the air with mysticism, and all the allegories were understood at once by those for whom they were intended. But times have changed. In this materialistic age it is known that the wildest misconceptions exist in the minds of many who are mystically and spiritually inclined. The generality of mystics and their followers are not free from the superstitions and prejudices which have in church and science their

NOTE.—This article first appeared in THEOSOPHY, February, 1942

> counterpart. Therefore in my humble opinion there can be no justification for writing allegorically on mysticism, and, by publication, placing such writings within reach of all. To do so is positively mischievous. If allegorical writings and misleading novels are intended to popularize mysticism by removing existing prejudices, then the writers ought to express their motives. It is an open question whether the benefit resulting from such popularization is not more than counterbalanced by the injury worked to helpless votaries of mysticism, who are misled. (THEOSOPHY VI, 12.)

This question really relates to the educational psychology of the Theosophical Movement. Jesus explained to his disciples that he spoke to the multitude in parables because "this people's heart is waxed gross." The disciples could understand "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," but not the crowd. Buddha, when asked by a monk whether or not there is an Ego, refused to answer. (See *Key*, p. 81.) Plato, in suggesting the laws of Karma and Reincarnation, resorted to myth and allegory (see tenth book of the *Republic*), and in a letter asserted that the highest truths cannot be set down in words. Similarly, H. P. Blavatsky withheld in *Isis Unveiled* explicit discussion of ideas that she was later to expound in detail. The time for these explanations, she said, had not come when *Isis* was written.

It is plain from these illustrations that in some periods of history, the pure metaphysics of certain doctrines is precocious and liable to hopeless distortion, while at other times such disclosures are requirements of intellectual evolution. In dark periods of mind, allegory is all that can be understood, but as Manasic perception emerges, evolving the instruments and materials of abstract thought, less and less allegory is necessary. The cycle beginning in 1875 was quite clearly a time when the mind of the race was to undergo an accelerated development in its powers of abstract thought. Hence *The Secret Doctrine*.

Throughout this work, in almost every discussion of symbolism, H.P.B. is engaged in giving the abstract or metaphysical meaning behind religious allegories. In most cases she finds it necessary to employ Sanscrit terms for these subtle philosophical conceptions, there being no corresponding English words. One might say that *The Secret Doctrine* is a book which restates world-religions in the language of metaphysics.

Compare this aspect of H.P.B.'s mission with the work of

Jesus, who was concerned with the turning of metaphysical truth *back into allegory!* He, and other "witnesses on the scene," must have known that cycle we call the "Christian era" would begin with centuries of degradation, making the people "ripe for abuse of occult powers and sorcery of the worst description."

There must be and is direct correspondence between the degree of Manasic or intellectual evolution of a race and the form in which the Wisdom-Religion is brought to that race by the agents of the Theosophical Adepts. Take, for example, the early Greek religion of the Mysteries. In his *De Dione,* Synesius repeats the view of Aristotle that from the Eleusinian Mysteries, "the initiated learned nothing precisely, but that they received impressions and were put in *a certain frame of mind.*" While there must have been direct occult instruction in the higher degrees of initiation, it was quite natural, among a people so psychic as the Greeks, that the first steps upon the Path would be in the direction of purified feelings and a receptiveness to ennobling thoughts—"a certain frame of mind." Later on, it was the work of Pythagoras and Plato to reduce the popular legends of Greek religion to rational theories and metaphysical conceptions. These great teachers mark the Manasic awakening of the Greek nation. At their hands the meaning behind religious allegories was given philosophic form.

But not all of Plato's doctrines were metaphysical. He, like his predecessors, had to employ image and parable, and to avoid the traditional figures of Greek religion he composed his own myths. This has been partly understood by modern students. Lange, in his *History of Materialism,* observes that in Plato "Socratic Rationalism outruns itself, and in the effort to elevate the sphere of reason high above the sensations, went so far that a relapse into mythical forms became inevitable." This, he adds, should not be regarded as a "weakness," but was the necessary result of dealing with problems "that cannot be treated in any but a figurative method." (I, 73.) Plato's works are literary as well as philosophical masterpieces. He wrote in a popular form because he desired books to be *read.* Insofar as he believed it could be understood, he employed the language of metaphysics, and to suggest the more ultimate truths of the Wisdom-Religion he resorted to mystical allegories.

Plato's immediate disciples and, later on, the Neoplatonists,

continued the work of "rationalizing" the allegorical teachings of the past. In commentaries on Plato's works they explained the inner meaning of his myths. The Neoplatonists are often accused by scholars of having corrupted Plato's thought with theurgic elements and an enthusiastic mysticism of which their Master never dreamed, but what they really did was to make his meaning more explicit in the disciplined terms of abstract philosophy. Only the ascendency of Christianity as a dogmatic religion put a stop to their work.

The Middle Ages brought another cycle of allegory, during which all pagan teachings were degraded into the service of the Christian Myth. This was the childhood of modern civilization, and few there were who could understand anything more than the simple fables of materialized religion. But today the time has come to throw off the smothering clouds of misunderstood allegory. In an article devoted to this subject, "Iconoclasm Towards Illusions," Mr. Judge wrote:

> Were we dealing with children or with a race mind which though dwelling in an adult body is but that of a child, then, indeed, it would be right to lead them on by what may be entirely an illusion. But the day of man's childhood as an immortal being has passed away. He is now grown up, his mind has arrived at the point where it must know, and when, if knowledge be refused, this violation of our being will result in the grossest and vilest superstition or the most appalling materialism. . . .
>
> That "great orphan Humanity," now grown up, no longer needs the toys of a thousand years ago, but requires, and with a voice like the rush of mighty waters demands, that every veil shall be lifted, every lie unveiled, and every light be lighted that can shed a ray upon the remainder of its toilsome road. (THEOSOPHY I, 460-61.)

What were formerly teachings veiled in myth and allegory are now the unequivocal doctrines of the Theosophical philosophy. The present is the cycle of awakened Manasic perception, moving onward toward a more effectual union of the fifth and sixth principles of man's being in the next great Race. With the Theosophical philosophy there is provided, however, an entirely new symbolism, to take the place of the old—the spiritual imagery of *The Voice of the Silence*. So long as man has a dual existence, subjective and objective—so long, that is, as there remain hidden depths of the spirit to be fathomed within himself—just so long

will there be need of symbolism and allegory. But with each progressive step on the ladder of mental and moral evolution, the order of the symbols must change. What was once form and figure—the allegory of the past—is now realized through metaphysical ideas. What in the past was not known even to the speculative imagination of ordinary men, is now suggested by the subtleties of occult cipher, the language of the soul.

CONCENTRATION

Literal meaning, "with the centre," *i.e.,* balance. To hold the mind on any object without thinking of anything but it. One of the practices of occultism. Does not consist in staring at a spot on the wall or anything in particular, but in keeping the mind free from thoughts and desires that draw it away from that upon which it should be placed. Difficulty of concentration in the West, owing to thought indulgences, and want of strength of character. Concentration results from ability to keep the mind fixed upon whatever duty it has to perform. To think of results is to destroy the concentrative power. Hence duty without desire for reward is one phase of it. It differs from meditation, inasmuch as the latter consists in revolving a matter in the mind in order to understand it, whereas concentration is merely the holding of the mind on the object. Concentration however is a necessary adjunct to meditation. Vanity, egotism, individual affections and preferences, personality of all kinds, the desire for position and wealth, hate, jealousy, fear, are all destroyers of the concentrative faculty. Hence they are to be avoided by the student. When the mind can hold itself upon its karmic duties without any tendency to flee therefrom to other objects, then it will discover how to unite itself with the spirit.

—*The Theosophical Forum*

letters • questions • comment

How does Theosophy explain "frustration" and "alienation"? These ideas are key conceptions in the serious criticism of our time, yet difficult to define and puzzling in themselves.

These words represent an attempt to name the kinds of psychic pain which seem practically universal in the present. They have very frequent use because the focus of reflective and analytical thinking, in this cycle, is on inner, psychological processes, due to the progressive awakening of mental and psychic faculties. Frustration is the feeling that we do not have what we desire or belongs to us, and are prevented from accomplishing what we want to do. Since our desires and actions are pursued at various levels, so there are corresponding levels of frustration. Alienation is the feeling of having been disinherited by life or life's conditions. The sense of being rejected is alienation; the outcast is treated as an "alien"; social thinkers say that the worker who is obliged by his need to perform tasks which seem trivial and unworthy and who has no part in the satisfaction which grows from useful work is doubly alienated—his life seems separated from both his real intentions and the natural fruits of those intentions. Obviously, the feelings of frustration and alienation are closely related.

Theosophy provides a metaphysical and a psychological approach to the understanding of these feelings. The feeling of isolation or separateness—which brings deep and persistent pain—is an inevitable psychological effect of the human condition, which is to be understood, H.P.B. says, only through an archaic Eastern formula. This she gives in her article, "The Origin of Evil," explaining that the ancient wisdom—

> attributes the birth of Kosmos and the evolution of life to the breaking asunder of primordial, manifested UNITY, into plurality, or the great illusion of form. HOMOGENEITY having transformed itself into Heterogeneity, contrasts have naturally been created; hence sprang what we call EVIL, which thenceforward reigned supreme in this "Vale of Tears."

Human beings, in essence expressions of conscious spiritual intelligence, are in the grip of this illusion of separateness, yet at the same time feel the loss of the original unity which the illusion entails. This sense of violated unity emerges again and again at various levels in our lives. In bodily existence we experience it as appetite and desire; as mind-beings we recognize it in the ignorance we seek to dispel; while as monads we know it as spiritual longing for reunion with the One.

No human is exempt from the pain of frustration and alienation. Even the Buddha, as a young man, knew its haunting pangs as he wandered the corridors of his palace on sleepless nights, wondering why he could not feel at peace, and what he should be doing that he was not doing. In the *Symposium,* Plato has Socrates explain Love as evidence of deprivation. We long for and are attracted by what we lack. Love, indeed, is the philosophical and natural remedy for alienation, as well as its cause, yet difficult to apply and understand in a world filled with illusion. We have so many "loves," each with its corresponding frustration!

The *Bhagavad-Gita* is a treatise on release from frustration and alienation. Arjuna is frustrated because the Great War is requiring him to give up allegiances he had thought were necessary and right; and he is alienated because the Kurus have usurped his kingdom. His problem is in deciding which frustrations he should try to remedy and which he should learn to ignore. Krishna, as Arjuna's better Self—his intuition, and his Teacher—points to the path of action and at the same time throws light on the paradoxes of human life, which Arjuna must understand if he is to act wisely. Action linked with wisdom is plainly the remedy for frustration, and the simplest way of describing this action is by calling it Duty. Duty is what we are meant by nature to do and what we ought to do. *Wanting* to do our duty involves the difficult task of seeing that it is both good in itself and leads to good. For this knowledge is required—knowledge of the nature of things and of the Self, or Theosophy as the rational explanation of things.

A central paradox is the need for both submission to and transcendence of frustration:

> The senses, moving toward their appropriate objects, are producers of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, which come and go and are brief and changeable; these do thou endure O son

> of Bharata! For the wise man, whom these disturb not and to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is fitted for immortality.

The immortal who is no longer subject to the illusions of the senses and the separateness they impose is freed of the frustrations to which the senses give rise. He may, however, still experience the sort of frustration which was known to the Buddha when he declared, "I would not let one cry whom I could save!" The pain felt by Great Teachers, spoken of in the *Voice* as "mental woe unspeakable," is at root the Promethean agony. As H.P.B. explains in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 492, Prometheus could not escape the pain of his calling, but he "suffered in self-sacrifice," and had this "supreme consolation." For "the divine Titan is moved by altruism, but the mortal man by Selfishness and Egoism in every instance."

Knowing and understanding the operation of law at various levels of desire enables us to understand the differences in where frustration is felt. We are averse to pain, but there is also happiness which does not last. Krishna speaks of the release from our original pain to impermanent pleasure, and of what lies beyond:

> Those enlightened in the three *Vedas*, offering sacrifices to me and obtaining sanctification from drinking the soma juice, petition me for heaven; thus they attain the region of Indra, the prince of celestial beings, and there feast upon celestial food and are gratified with heavenly enjoyments. And they, having enjoyed that spacious heaven for a period in proportion to their merits, sink back into this mortal world where they are born again as soon as their stock of merit is exhausted; thus those who long for the accomplishment of desires, following the *Vedas*, obtain a happiness which comes and goes. But for those who, thinking of me as identical with all, constantly worship me, I bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness.

The soul's longing for "more stately mansions" is the essential cause of manifestation, but when a world comes into being, all the illusions of separateness and the limited unities they allow become prisons of the involved ego. The spirit, in order to become conscious and able to build a better mansion, garbs itself in raw material, or matter, and frustration and alienation are a way of describing the consequences of this embodiment. Only when these consequences are seen as natural can they be overcome. The rule is given by H.P.B. in the *Key* (p.159-60): "Buddhi would remain only an impersonal spirit without this element [Manas]

which it borrows from the human soul, which conditions and makes of it, in this illusive Universe, *as it were something separate* from the universal soul for the whole period of the cycle of incarnation."

In general, we find the multiple uses of "frustration" and "alienation" by modern writers puzzling because the terms are employed with little if any distinction between the higher and the lower man. The duality of Manas is the key to the puzzle—the difference between psychic and noetic action, between egoic and earthly longing. Through a knowledge of Karma and Reincarnation we obtain a psychology which illuminates the paradoxes of human nature and the endless repetition, on level after level, of the same kind of anticipations and disappointments. From this practical self-knowledge we learn what to put up with and what to put an end to. Such growth may not eliminate either frustration or alienation, but these feelings are at last recognized for what they are and dealt with accordingly. They lose their threat, becoming rungs on the ladder of being.

Symbolic Alphabets

The religious and esoteric history of every nation was embedded in symbols; it was never expressed in so many words. All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable. Why? Because *the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in,* by the modern "sages." Because sound and rhythm are closely related to the four Elements of the Ancients; and because such or another vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be. No student was ever allowed to recite historical, religious, or any real events in so many unmistakable words, lest the powers connected with the event should be once more attracted. Such events were narrated only during the Initiation, and every student had to record them in corresponding symbols, drawn out of his own mind and examined later by his master, before they were finally accepted. Thus was created in time the Chinese Alphabet, as, before that, the hieratic symbols were fixed upon in old Egypt.

—H. P. Blavatsky

on the lookout

Still on the Sidelines

In the March *Atlantic*, Thomas Griffith writes in defense of pessimism, calling himself "a pessimist in the second degree." He presents a thoughtful view of present hopes and fears among the intelligentsia, and the account given of his own ideas and feelings becomes a useful summary of what may be the attitude of a large number of intelligent and literate people. Toward the end of this short article, he says:

> Pessimism, at a profound level, also dominates the best of religious thinking these days, in the speculations of men confronting the twentieth century's many proofs of the depravity of man. This attitude is now being challenged, numerically but perhaps not intellectually, by the populist spread of evangelical faith, with its celebration of the joys of being reborn. When it comes to religion, I can only judge from the sidelines. My mother was a Roman Catholic, my father a tepid Protestant; their differences severed our family and I ended with no faith during that impressionable age when religion, if mixed in with the rest of one's schooling, colors one's thinking permanently. In Disraeli's famous question, to which he himself answered that he was on the side of the angels, I am on the side of the apes. . . .
>
> Faith to Tillich was not something beyond the truth, or contrary to the facts, but "reason in ecstasy." Such ecstasy has never been mine. The scientific explanation of the birth of the universe, of the earth, and of mankind seems to me more plausible and verifiable than Genesis, but—being no scientist—I confess I would have as much difficulty proving the scientific case to a Zulu as would someone else describing the Resurrection.

Hand-Me-Down Ethics

This seems a rather apt illustration of the law given in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 326), to the effect that "for every thinker there will be a 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther,' mapped out by his intellectual capacity, as clearly and unmistakeably as there is for the progress of any nation or race in its cycle by the

law of Karma." Only through "initiation," H.P.B. says, can this limitation be overcome—which in this case, we may think, would mean serious investigation of the Secret Doctrine's teachings. Mr. Griffith does not seem about to undertake any such course, yet he is well aware of the inadequacy of present explanations:

> Now that heretics are no longer being burned, I find it natural to get my history from science and my ethics from religion. Science never asks whether a truth is consoling. But in usurping so much of religion's place while insisting on its own right to be value-free in its explorations, it has left a void where values should be. Each must seek his own. My own hand-me-down ethics make a magpie's anthology that teakes as much from theologians as from philosophers.

No Cosmic Consequence?

Well, as Mr. Judge put it in one of his *Path* articles, in this cycle the final authority is the man himself, and Mr. Griffith seems of this mind. Such independence in thinking, a heritage of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, is indeed necessary to any human progress during the time of Manasic awakening. Yet he does not seem inclined to look for intellectual resources anywhere but in what current conventional authorities have to say. At the same time, he is increasingly aware of the "void" they leave in areas of crucial decision:

> Even the nonbelievers among scientists, as they come closer to unlocking the secrets of nature, seem awed by nature's complexity and subtlety. Perhaps Earth was formed by a random coming together of gases; perhaps a man's body is only a marvelously evolved combination of about $10 worth of chemicals; perhaps one's own brief life is of no cosmic consequence.

The "Daunting Questions"

> To me life is still a gift. Theologians may have to worry about the problem of evil in a world created by an all-good and all-powerful deity. Yes, but coldly mechanistic explanations of the world's origin, which assume no divine creation, must, it seems to me, wrestle with equally daunting questions—how, in so uncaring a universe, to explain the existence of goodness, of beauty, of trust and love, and the inexplicable reaches of the imagination.

Surely a time must come when men of such sanity and common sense will feel compelled to press those "daunting questions" on their own account, leaving both theologians and mechanists

behind. There may be here an application of Krishna's final counsel to Arjuna—the very principles of their nature, along with the insistences of nature around us, may compel them to engage.

A Fit of Generosity

A little less than ninety years ago, writing in *Lucifer* (May, 1889), H.P.B. reproached a contemporary writer for claiming that a grant of twenty million pounds in behalf of people suffering from famine had "a moral grandeur that sinks the Pyramid into littleness." England, she said, then the wealthiest country in the world, would do far better with such benefactions were "it to pander less to national pride, and were the nation not to feel itself so exalted for it." Commenting, she said:

> Twenty millions are a Niagara inundating with Titanic force some popular want, and creating, for the time being, as great a commotion. But, while helping for a certain lapse of time tens of thousands of hungry wretches, even such an enormous sum leaves ten times as many unfortunate, starving wretches still unrelieved.

A Better Arrangement

> To such munificent bounties we prefer small countries where there are no needy people at all, e.g., those small communities, the remnants of once mighty races, which allow no beggars among their co-religionists—we mean the Parsis. Under the Indian and Buddhist Kings, like Chandragupta and Asoka, people did not wait, as they do now, for a national calamity, to throw the surplus of their overflowing wealth at the head of a portion of the starving and the homeless, but worked steadily on, century after century, building *resthouses*, digging wells and planting fruit-trees along the roads, wherein the weary pilgrim and penniless traveler could always find rest and shelter, be fed and receive hospitality at the national expense. A little clear stream of cold, healthy water which runs steadily, and is ever ready to refresh parched lips, is more beneficent than the sudden torrent that breaks the dam of national indifference, now and then, by fits and starts.

Disastrous Relief

Today there are more frequent occasions for such reproaches. The earthquake relief rushed to Guatemala by American agencies after the catastrophe there in 1976 turned out to be almost a total disaster, according to a report in *Mother Jones* for February/

March. The groups involved were CARE and Catholic Relief Services. The report says:

> Shortly after the earthquake, the two organizations persuaded the U.S. government to donate 27,000 tons of grain to Guatemala. . . . Unfortunately, what both these organizations and our government ignored was that Guatemala had no need of grain. In fact, it had harvested its largest crop in years just before the quake. "The general effect was that we knocked the bottom out of the grain market in the country for nine months," Kenneth Brown, director of Catholic Relief in Guatemala, now admits.

Welfare Mentality

The *Mother Jones* writer elaborates:

> What it means is that the vulnerable economy of small farmers—Indians who live in the highlands north of Guatemala City—was devastated. Dependent on grain sales to provide money to rebuild their homes, they watched, helpless, as the imported grain drove the price of their crop down. . . .

A chain of small mountain cooperative farms which had been slowly developing through years of effort was seriously weakened, while Indian leaders were upset by the expectation that handouts of food, clothing, and building material would produce a "welfare mentality" in the recipients. Actually, the local distributors of relief gained authority with the people:

> According to one long-time observer, six to eight months after the earthquake, this new leadership was still parlaying handouts into a new power structure among the despairing Indians.

Looking back, a spokesman for the U.S. Agency for International Development said sending the grain was a disastrous mistake. Describing what had happened, he said:

> "Essentially, you have an alliance between liberal do-gooders and conservative farming interests. Both want to see surplus American food shipped out to save the 'starving' world.
>
> "But the starving world would be better off if it were taught to grow its own food and to build its own grassroots organizations."

Change in Food Supply

The thinking reflected in this final comment, so succinctly expressed, echoes H.P.B.'s approval of small, self-reliant countries "where there are no needy people at all"—a view now widely held by the advocates of intermediate technology—while the capacity of all the peoples of the world to grow their own food is

the major contention of the epoch-making book, *Food First,* by Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins. In a new book, *The Right to Useful Unemployment* (London: Marion Boyars), Ivan Illich finds the extreme decline in self-sufficient agriculture a comparatively recent development. He says:

> All through history, the best measure for bad times was the percentage of food eaten that had to be purchased. In good times, most families got most of their nutrition from what they grew or acquired in a network of gift relationships. Until late in the eighteenth century, more than 99 percent of the world's food was produced inside the horizon that the consumer could see from the church steeple or minaret. Laws that tried to control the number of chickens and pigs within the city walls suggest that, except for a few large urban areas, more than half of all food eaten was also cultivated within the city. Before World War II, less than 4 per cent of all food eaten was transported into the region from abroad, and these imports were largely confined to the eleven cities which then contained more than two million inhabitants. Today, 40 per cent of all people survive only because they have access to inter-regional markets.

Colonial Policy

The burden of Ivan Illich's book is concern for the lowered capacity for self-reliance and the increasing dependency of people around the world on purchased and often imported goods and services. The tragic results of this dependency are spelled out in detail in *Food First,* which shows that lack of access to land is the primary cause of such disasters as the recurring famines in the African Sahel and in other parts of the world. Of this region bordering the Sahara, Lappé and Collins say: "Sahelian Mali was once known as the breadbasket of Africa." In good years the farmers stored grain against the time of drought and small harvests. But this traditional practice of storing food ceased with the conquest by the French and the conversion of the land to colonial possessions. The land was exploited for cash crops, bringing the need for artificial fertilizers, and in time more land was treated in this way to meet rising costs. Raising crops for cash sale instead of food became the rule.

Starving Country's Exports

These writers ask:

> How do those who blame drought and an encroaching desert for famine in the Sahel explain the vast amounts of agricultural goods sent out of the region, even during the worst years

> of drought? Ships in the Dakar port bringing in "relief" food departed with stores of peanuts, cotton, vegetables, and meat. Of the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of agricultural goods the Sahel exported during the drought, over 60 per cent went to consumers in Europe and North America and the rest to elites in other African countries, principally in the Ivory Coast and Nigeria. Marketing control—and profits—are still by and large in the hands of foreign, primarily French corporations.

Instead of Food

The governments of the Sahelian countries push export crops in order to obtain foreign exchange—much of it used to import what amount to luxuries—air conditioners, cars, refrigerators, and television sets.

> Even when part of the export earnings is used to import food, it generally does not reach those who labor in the fields but is consumed by the better-off urban classes. More than half of the foreign exchange Senegal earned exporting peanuts in 1974 was spent to import wheat for French-owned bread factories that turned out European-style white bread for urban dwellers.

So, as the representative of the U.S. Agency for International Development put it, "the starving world would be better off if it were taught"—and, we must add, *allowed*—"to grow its own food and to build its own grassroots organizations."

Gandhi's Rule of Life

Many things are to be learned from the life and example of M. K. Gandhi, perhaps the most impressive being his insistence on thorough and sometimes immediate application of constructive ideas. Emphasized throughout his career is this union of thought with action. A letter from a reader in *Peacemaker* for March 13, tells how, in Gandhi's South African days, his household ground its own flour and baked its own bread. At that time Gandhi was publishing a newspaper to campaign for fairness to the Indians who had settled and were working there, countering the misrepresentations in the South African press. While this was going on, Gandhi strove for simplicity in personal life. In his household—

> Furniture was kept to the essentials. Each person cleaned up after himself instead of hiring servants to do the dirty work. Still, the greatest changes were internal. A genuine passion for a simple form of existence took root. Then came *Unto This*

Last. Gandhi read it in one sitting and spent a sleepless night deciding how to put Ruskin's ideas into practice. A form of agrarian communalism seemed best.

The Ideas Came First

This was the origin of the Phoenix settlement:

> Gandhi walked into the newspaper office and proposed that the press be moved to a farm where the staff would live off the land and attend to the paper in spare time. Each worker, regardless of function, would draw the same pay. Enough of the personnel agreed. Within two weeks 100 acres of farm land and orchards were purchased and the workers with their families moved into hastily erected tents. Thus began Gandhi's first commune.

"That," the *Peacemaker* correspondent observes, "was Gandhi's solution to the knotty problems of economics." The ideas which shaped this plan were in the air for Gandhi, and Ruskin's book caused them to gel. As this writer says:

> The external was not an accurate reflection of the internal. It is crucial to realize that a change in ideas came first. . . .

Humans Are Trustees

Further reflections show how, by a use of some imagination, the example set by a man like Gandhi may lead to something more productive than imitation:

> What of us? Joining or starting a farming commune is a dim prospect. Yet, the ideas that underlie such a lifestyle can be integrated into nearly any type of living situation. The key is a change of ideas. One concept that can be changed is that of private ownership. The notion that what I have is mine to do with as I please and no one has any claim on it leads to a great deal of injustice. In place of private ownership I would suggest the idea of trusteeship. It is based on the concept that the wealth of the earth (and all wealth coming from the earth) belongs to no one. Each may claim what is sufficient to meet needs (as opposed to wants). The rest belongs to others who need it to meet their legitimate needs. If I have more than I need, others have less than they need, and I may not squander the surplus on myself. Rather, I hold it "in trust," to be given to its rightful claimants [those in need] as the opportunities arise.

This thoughtful discussion recalls H.P.B.'s definition of Duty in *The Key to Theosophy:*

> Duty is that which *is due* to Humanity, to our fellow-men, neighbors, family, and especially that which we owe to all

those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves. This is a debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and moral bankrupts in our next incarnation. Theosophy is the quintessence of *duty*.

For the Common Good

A pamphlet by Ram Swarup on *Gandhian Economics,* with proposals for a supporting technology, sponsored by the Appropriate Technology Association of Lucknow, India, shows how Gandhi's ideas may be widely applied. The writer says in one place:

> Gandhian Economics stresses community of interests, not conflicts. All should work in the spirit of harmony, in the spirit of making their contribution to a common good. "Input" and "Factors of Production" are terms which do not find favour with Gandhian thought. For, these terms are too mechanical and smack of an exploitive spirit. We are participants in a common venture. Labour is not just for hire and fire. It is a precious partner. Gandhian Economics will create an economy in which we have use for one another's talents and contributions and not an economy where the vast masses and their talents become redundant by some impersonal, unknown market operations. To my mind, the problem of the East is not overpopulation, but a people who no longer have any use for their own talents, skills, resources. They want to be saved by skills, technology and resources imported from the outside.

The Rhythm of Life

Other remarks by Ram Swarup illustrate the prophetic character of the great Indian apostle of non-violence. Gandhi anticipated in many ways the conceptions of right living and human relations which today are claiming increasing attention. Mr. Swarup says:

> At the heart of Gandhian thinking is the small man, the man with his individual skill, capital and initiative. It is local production for local use with local resources. It is an economics of decentralisation, of independent workers.
>
> Not that it rules out large-scale production altogether, but its bias is in the direction of small-scale production, decentralisation. Its emphasis is not on corporate production, nor on state ownership, but on production by families and small groups in their own natural environment working with their own resources and following their own rhythm of life.

"As if People Mattered"

On the question of foreign aid, Gandhian thinking rejects the

Western theory that the developing countries should imitate the industrialized modern states. The Gandhian economist would say:

> First, that we can rise by our own efforts, our own skill; secondly, that the recipient countries should not be turned into the image of the donor countries but that these countries should develop and adapt according to their own genius and needs. I believe that this process of adaptation could be a very productive process and could even give rise to a new Technology which is relevant even to the needs of the West.

A final comment is that while Gandhi's ideas on economics may sometimes be converted into scholarly language, his thinking, Mr. Swarup says, was not "analytic." His genius was "for synthesis." The same might be said of E. F. Schumacher. While quite capable of the learned analyses of conventional economics, he chose to present ideas in the terms of common understanding—as if, as he said, "people mattered." This helps to explain his extraordinary influence. There is a deep hunger in people everywhere for synthesis in their practical as well as their inner lives. The achievements of Mr. Schumacher show the spread of Gandhi's seminal ideas, and the value of *applying* what you think.

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